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EXAMINER

FELTEN, DANIEL S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3624

DATE MAILED: 02/10/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.  
**09/450,023**

Applicant(s)

**Gindlesperger**

Examiner

**Daniel Felten**

Art Unit

**3624**



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Jan 30, 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 6-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 6-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claims \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.  
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).  
\*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).  
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_ 6) ☐ Other:

**DETAILED ACTION**

1  
2 1. Receipt of the Supplemental Amendment filed January 30, 2003 amending claims 1, 2,  
3 4, 6, 7, 19, 20, 22, 24 and canceling claim 5 is acknowledged. Claims 1-4 and 6-24 are  
4 pending and presented to be examined upon their merits.  
5

6 ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7 2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all  
8 obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

9 (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in  
10 section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are  
11 such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person  
12 having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the  
13 manner in which the invention was made.

14 Claims 1, 2, 6-10 and 19-24 Walker et al (hereinafter "WA207", US 5,794,207) in view of  
15 Gustafson (US 5,659,731).  
16

17 **As in Claim 1:**

18 WA207 discloses a method for competitive bidding vendors of customized goods or services see  
19 WA207, col. 10, ll. 31+), comprising steps of:

1 receiving a vendor record from at least one of said vendors, said vendor record having a  
2 vendor identifier data representing a vendor, and a vendor capability data identifying a capability  
3 of said vendor to provide a customized *good or service for each of a plurality of vendors in a*  
4 *pool of vendors* (see WA207, *seller database and CPO database*, col. 13, ll. 11-29);

5 receiving a job data (*Conditional Purchase Offer--CPO*) from said buyer, said job data  
6 having a buyer identifier data representing said buyer, and a job descriptor data representing a  
7 custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid (see WA207, example col. 8, ll. 42-  
8 56);

9 transmitting a solicitation (or CPO) to *only selected members from the pool of vendors*  
10 (WA207, col. 8, ll. 57 to col. 9, ll. 30);

11 receiving a bid response data from at least one of said vendors to which said transmitting  
12 step transmitted said solicitation, said bid response data identifying the vendor it was received  
13 and a bid price (WA207, col. 9, ll. 17-51); *and*

14 identifying a candidate bid from said received bid data, based on comparative values of  
15 said bid prices (WA207, col. 16, ll. 12-45);

16 outputting to said buyer *said bid response data* (WA207, col. 16, ll. 12-45);

17 receiving an approval data from said buyer, said data representing one of an approval of  
18 said vendor corresponding to said candidate bid and an approval of another of said vendors; and  
19 transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said approval data (WA207, col. 29, ll. 52 to  
20 col. 30, ll. 29).

1 WA207 fails to disclose *automatically* comparing (*or matching*) said vendor records to  
2 said job data; and *automatically* identifying at least one *group from the pool of* vendors records  
3 as qualified for receiving an invitation for bid, based on said comparison. These features are  
4 disclosed by Gustafson (see Gustafson, Abstract, col. 3, ll. 18 to col. 4, ll. 9). Since WA207  
5 discloses that a seller database is accessed by the central controller (computer) to determines  
6 whether sellers/vendors are qualified to bind, or at least, have the ability to satisfy the  
7 requirements (conditions) of a given conditional purchase offer, "CPO" (see WA207, at least col.  
8 9, ll. 19-22; *giving point values for various met conditions--* col. 16, 12-45), It would have been  
9 obvious for an artisan at the time of the invention was made to integrate the method of  
10 automatically identifying, matching and evaluating information on a plurality of seller/vendor  
11 entities, as disclosed by Gustafson (see Gustafson, col. 13, ll. 10+), because an artisan at the time  
12 of the invention of WA207 would have desired to present to buyers a choice of seller/vendor  
13 entities which represent the "best fit" or "best qualified" to meet the needs of the buyer at of a  
14 pool of sellers/vendors (see WA207, *authorized dealers*, col. 10, ll. 40+). Thus to integrate the  
15 aforementioned method of Gustafson within the WA207 method would have been an obvious  
16 expedient well within the ordinary skill in the art.

1   **As in Claim 2:**

2           WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses wherein said job a selection criteria data, said  
3   selection criteria specifying at least one of a vendor name, a vendor capability, a descriptor of an  
4   ownership characteristic of said vendor,  
5   a descriptor of a union status of said vendor, and a vendor geographical location, and  
6   wherein said comparison is performed in accordance with said selection criteria data (see  
7   WA207, col. 13, ll. 11-22).

8  
9   **As in Claim 6:**

10          WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses wherein the vendor capability data represents the  
11   identified vendor's capability to manufacture each of a plurality of different types of customized  
12   goods *or furnish each of a plurality of customized services* (see WA207, col. 13, ll. 10-22).

13  
14   **As in Claims 7, 9:**

15          WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses further comprising steps of inputting into said  
16   central data server a completion of job data (see WA207, *Accepted CPO from a seller*, col. 9, ll.  
17   24-29);  
18          transmitting from a central data *server to said* buyer an invoice (*CPO*) for payment of  
19   said bid price (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 31-35, col. 9, ll. 40-43);

1           inputting a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source  
2   accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 35-39);  
3           transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor  
4   corresponding to the invoice payment data (CPO) (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 35-39).  
5

6   **As in Claims 8, 10:**

7   WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses further comprising steps of:

8           adding the cost to the buyer of using the invention associated with each job as a job  
9   transaction fee to the vendor payment invoice prior to buyer approval of the invoice;

10          allocating and distributing a data representing payment of said invoice by transmitting the  
11   job transaction fee data to a system administration account and transmitting a remainder vendor  
12   payment data to an account of said vendor (see WA207, col. 20, ll. 16-28).  
13

14   **As in Claim 19:**

15   WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses a step of creating a web site;

16          wherein step of receiving a vendor record comprises a step of said vendor visiting said  
17   web site and inputting said record using a web browser (see WA207, col. 8, ll. 66 to col. 9, ll.  
18   16).  
19  
20

1  
2  
3 **As in Claim 20:**

4 WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses wherein the job data includes a preferred vendor  
5 data identifying at least one preferred *or non-preferred* vendor, and wherein said step of  
6 transmitting a solicitation includes transmitting said solicitation to said at least one preferred  
7 vendor (see WA207, col. 13, ll. 30-34).  
8

9 **As in Claim 21:**

10 WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses wherein said bid response data represents a  
11 proposed alternative specification for said custom job represented by said solicitation data and  
12 further comprising a step of:

13 displaying said alternative specifications; receiving an alternative specification approval  
14 data; and

15 identifying the vendor associated with the bid response data as qualified or not qualified  
16 to receive said invitation for bid, based on said alternative specification approval data (see  
17 WA207, counteroffers, col. 8, ll. 5-8; col. 9, ll. 45-51; col. 22, ll. 52+).  
18  
19  
20



1 **As in Claim 22:**

2 WA207 in view of Gustafson discloses a system for competitive bidding by vendors of  
3 customized goods and services, comprising:

4 A general purpose computer having a data storage (see WA207, col. 12, ll. 8-21);  
5 means for inputting a plurality of vendor records into said data storage, each of said  
6 vendor records having a vendor identifier data *representing* a vendor and a vendor capability data  
7 representing a capabilities of said vendor, *to provide a customized good or service for each of a*  
8 *plurality of vendors in a pool of vendors;*

9 means for inputting a job data into said data storage, said job data having a buyer  
10 identifier data, a job description data *representing* a  
11 custom job *for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid*, (see WA207, col. 12, ll. 8-21; col.  
12 12, ll. 54 to col. 13, ll. 22);

13 means for *automatically* generating a vendor pool data, said vendor pool data  
14 representing vendor records *for at least one group from the pool of vendors as* qualified to bid on  
15 said custom-job, each vendor record represented by the vendor pool data being qualified based  
16 on a match of at least one of a group consisting of said buyer identifier data, said job description  
17 data, and said selection criteria data to at least one of a group consisting of said vendor  
18 qualification data and said vendor identifier data (see WA207, col. 13, ll.1+);

19 means for transmitting a solicitation to *selected members* in said vendor pool; means for  
20 inputting into said general purpose computer a plurality of bid data, each being from a vendor to

1 which said solicitation was transmitted, each of said bid data representing a bid price (see

2 WA207, CPO, col. 12, ll. 9-11; col. 15, ll. 46+);

3 means for identifying a bid data from said received bid data having the lowest  
4 represented bid price; *and*

5 means for outputting to said buyer said *bid data* and

6 means for receiving an approval data from said buyer, the approval data indicating an  
7 approval of one of said vendor represented by said selected vendor data or another of said  
8 vendors means for transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said received approval  
9 data (see WA207, col. 16, ll. 11-45).

10  
11 **As in Claim 23:**

12 wherein said means for receiving a plurality of vendor records includes a web host, and a  
13 web browser associated with at least one of said buyer and said vendors (see WA207, col. 14, ll.  
14 7-29).

15  
16 **As in Claim 24:**

17 A method for competitive bidding by vendors of customized goods or services, comprising steps  
18 of:

1 receiving a job data (*CPO*) from said buyer, said job data having a buyer identifier data  
2 representing said buyer, and a job descriptor data representing a custom job (*CPO*) for which said  
3 buyer wishes a price quote or bid (see WA207, col. 13, ll. 1-10);

4 distributing to a plurality of vendors, by electronic publishing, a job advertising data  
5 representing said custom job (see WA207, col. 15, ll. 46-52; and col. 15, ll. 60 to col. 16, ll. 11);

6 receiving a bid response data from at least one of said plurality of vendors, said bid  
7 response data identifying the vendor it was received from, a bid price, and an alternative  
8 specification data representing a proposed deviation (*counteroffer*) from said job descriptor data  
9 (see WA207, counteroffers, col. 8, ll. 5-8; col. 9, ll. 45-51; col. 22, ll. 52+);

10 identifying a selected bid from said received bid response data, based on comparative  
11 values of said bid price and said alternative specification data (see WA207, counteroffers, col. 8,  
12 ll. 5-8; col. 9, ll. 45-51; col. 22, ll. 52+);

13 transmitting an order (*CPO*) to the vendor represented by said selected bid (see WA207,  
14 counteroffers, col. 8, ll. 5-8; col. 9, ll. 45-51; col. 22, ll. 52+);

15 generating a job milestone data based on said job descriptor data (see WA207,  
16 counteroffers, col. 8, ll. 5-8; col. 9, ll. 45-51; col. 22, ll. 52+); and

17 receiving job progress data from said vendor represented by said selected bid (see fig. 7,  
18 WA207, status, col. 17, ll. 48-64).

1  
2 3. Claims 3, 4, 5, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable  
3 over Walker et al (hereinafter "WA207", US 5,794, 207) as modified by Gustafson (US  
4 5,659,731) as applied to claim 1 as discussed above and in further view of Fischer et al  
5 (hereinafter "Fischer", US 6,243,691 B1). The teachings of WA207 as modified by Gustafson  
6 have been discussed above.

7  
8 **Regarding Claims 3, 4, 5:**

9 WA207 as modified by Gustafson fails to fairly suggest steps of:  
10 ranking said received bid response data according to said represented bid price; and  
11 publishing an information data to other vendors identifying said selected vendor and the  
12 rank order value of said received bid data; and  
13 identifying said selected vendor and the rank order value of said received bid response  
14 data.

15 These features are found in Fischer (see fig. 7, col. 9, ll. 43-65; col. 5, ll. 66 to col. 6, ll.  
16 60). It would have been obvious for an artisan of ordinary skill at the time of the invention to  
17 integrate the features disclosed in Fischer into WA207 as modified by Gustafson because an  
18 artisan at the time of the time of the invention would recognize the advantage of aforementioned  
19 features to inform users as to the status of their bid in comparison to other competing bidders.

1           Furthermore, the integration of such notoriously old and well known features of Fischer  
2 into the WA207 system, would provide greater competition between competitors as well as  
3 greater usage of the system. Thus such a modification would be an obvious expedient to an  
4 artisan of ordinary skill in the art.

5  
6   **Regarding Claim 11:**

7           WA207 as modified by Gustafson and in further view of Fischer discloses steps of  
8 inputting into said central data server a completion of job data (see WA207, *Accepted CPO from*  
9 *a seller*, col. 9, ll. 24-29);

10           transmitting from said central data server to said buyer an invoice (*CPO*) for payment of  
11 said bid price (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 31-35, col. 9, ll. 40-43);

12           inputting a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source  
13 accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 35-39);

14           transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor  
15 corresponding to the invoice payment data (*CPO*) (see WA207, col. 9, ll. 35-39).

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1 **Regarding Claim 12:**

2 WA207 as modified by Gustafson and in further view of Fischer comprising steps of  
3 adding the cost to the buyer of using the invention associated with each job as a job transaction  
4 fee to the vendor payment invoice prior to buyer approval of the invoice;  
5 allocating and distributing a data representing payment of said invoice by transmitting the  
6 job transaction fee data to a system administration account and transmitting a remainder vendor  
7 payment data to an account of said vendor (see WA207, col. 20, ll. 16-28).

8  
9  
10 4. Claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over  
11 Walker et al (hereinafter "WA207", US 5,794, 207) as modified by Gustafson (US 5,659,731) as  
12 applied to claim 1 as discussed above and in further view of Walker et al (hereinafter "WA911"  
13 US 5,963,911). The teachings of WA207 as modified by Gustafson (US 5,659,731) have been  
14 discussed above.

15  
16 **Regarding Claims 13 and 14:**

17 WA207 as modified by Gustafson fails to disclose a step of calculating a job milestone  
18 data based on said buyer's job data. The aforementioned feature is taught by WA911 (see  
19 WA911, col. 13, ll. 30+).

1           It would have been obvious for an artisan of ordinary skill at the time of the invention of  
2   WA207 as modified by Gustafson to integrate the aforementioned feature disclosed in WA911  
3   into the WA207 system because WA207 system may provide a service (or supply a CPO) which  
4   requires progressive updates the completion of the service or job. Thus such a modification  
5   would have been an obvious expedient to one of ordinary skill in the art.

6  
7   **Regarding Claims 16 and 17:**

8   discloses steps of generating a job progress verification request based on said job milestone data;  
9   and   receiving a data representing a job progress corresponding to said job progress  
10   verification request (see WA911, col. 13, ll. 30+).

11  
12   5.    Claims 15 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over  
13   WA207 as modified by Gustafson and Fischer as applied to claim 3 above, and further in view  
14   of WA911.

15  
16   **Regarding claim 15:**

17        WA207 as modified by Gustafson and Fischer fail to disclose the step of calculating a  
18   job milestone data based on said buyer's job data. The calculation of a milestone is taught by  
19   WA911 (see WA911, col. 13, ll. 30+).       It would have been obvious for an artisan at the time  
20   of the invention to employ the teaching of WA911, including the aforementioned features, to

1 the teachings of WA207 as modified by Fischer because such a modification would have  
2 provided the WA207 system with pertinent information in the process of completion of specific  
3 orders/jobs processed by the system. Thus the ability for the system to monitor and track data  
4 processing would have been an obvious expedient well within the ordinary skill in the art.  
5

6 **Regarding claim 18:**

7 WA207 as modified by Gustafson and Fischer in further view of WA911 discloses steps of  
8 generating a job progress verification request based on said job milestone data; and  
9 receiving a data representing a job progress corresponding to said job progress  
10 verification request (see WA911, col. 13, ll. 30+).  
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*Conclusion*

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ***Daniel S. Felten*** whose telephone number is (703) 305-0724. The examiner can normally be reached between the hours of 7:00AM to 5:30PM Monday-Thursday. Any inquiry of a general nature relating to the status of this application or its proceedings should be directed to the Customer Service Office (703) 306-5631, or the examiner's supervisor ***Vincent Millin*** whose telephone number is (703) 308-1065.

8. Response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

Art Unit: 3624

Representative:

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1 for formal communications intended for entry, or (703) 305-0040, for informal or draft  
2 communications, please label "Proposed" or "Draft".

3 Communications via Internet e-mail regarding this application, other than those under 35  
4 U.S.C. 132 or which otherwise require a signature, may be used by the applicant and should be  
5 addressed to *[daniel.felten@uspto.gov]*.  
6

7 All Internet e-mail communications will be made of record in the application file. PTO  
8 employees do not engage in Internet communications where there exists a possibility that  
9 sensitive information could be identified or exchanged unless the record includes a properly  
10 signed express waiver of the confidentiality requirements of 35 U.S.C. 122. This is more clearly  
11 set forth in the Interim Internet Usage Policy published in the Official Gazette of the Patent and  
12 Trademark on February 25, 1997 at 1 195 OG 89.  
13  
14  
15

16 

17 DSF

18 February 3, 2003

  
VINCENT MILLIN  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600